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AN ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY INFLUENCE ON SOVIET DEFENSE  
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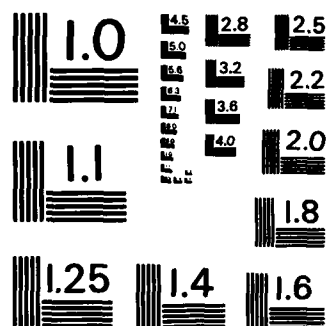
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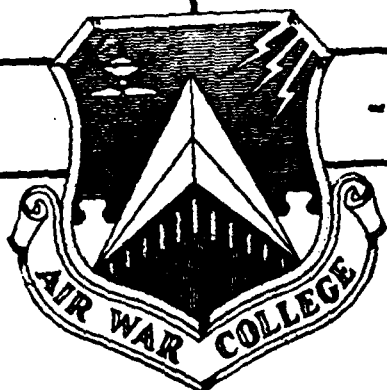
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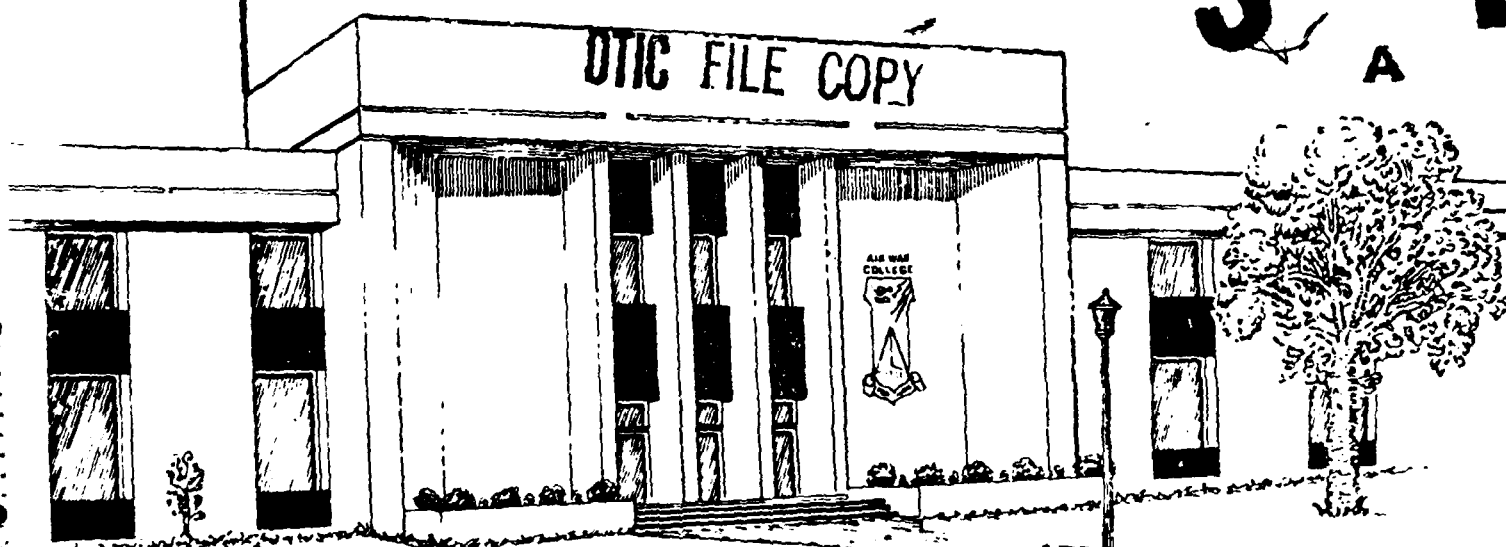
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AN ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY INFLUENCE ON  
SOVIET DEFENSE POLICY AND THE PARTY

By LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN E. MURPHY

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AIR WAR COLLEGE  
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AN ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY INFLUENCE ON  
SOVIET DEFENSE POLICY AND THE PARTY

by

JOHN E. MURPHY  
LIEUTENANT COLONEL, USAF

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH

REQUIREMENT

RESEARCH ADVISOR: LIEUTENANT COLONEL KENNETH N. BROWN

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

APRIL 1985



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**AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT**

**TITLE:**     **An Assessment of Military Influence on Soviet  
Defense Policy and the Party**

**AUTHOR:**   **John E. Murphy, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF**

This paper presents a review of the history and structure of Soviet military-party relationships showing an ever increasing role of the military in resource allocation and foreign policy decisionmaking. The implications of this steady growth of the military role, status and influence in the Soviet Union are studied in terms of the possibility of an eventual militarization of the Communist Party and government. If current, patterns of ideological stagnation, bureaucratic immobilism and economic deterioration continue, the party will find itself more progressively dependent on the military underscoring its' uneasiness of the status of this relationship.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel John E. Murphy (M.P.A., MA, Pepperdine University, B.S. Fordham University) has been interested in Soviet military affairs throughout his career. As an Air Force Officer he has traveled widely in the Soviet Union and has been a member of a United States Congressional Team that has debated Foreign and Military Policy in the Kremlin at the request of the Supreme Soviet. He has extensive flying experience in the B-52, F-4, and SR-71. He has served in numerous staff assignments on the Air Staff and most recently as the Air Force Liason Officer to the United States House of Representatives. Lieutenant Colonel Murphy is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1985.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The founding fathers of Marxism-Lenninism and the Soviet Union had only a faint notion about the role of the military in a post-revolutionary society. Even though Marx, Engels and Lenin forecast differing roles for revolutionary armed forces, they were in general agreement that in a communist society a standing army would not be needed. Lenin wrote that "a standing army is an army that is divorced from the people." The idea of a massive professional standing army in a post-revolutionary society was considered absurd, a concept that violated fundamental aspects of revolutionary ideology.

This revolutionary heresy has now become the orthodox of Soviet politics. The Soviet military today is a vast and complex institution whose interests strongly influence the country's social, economic, and political life. It has become a state within a state. The military is a primary consumer of scarce resources, of skilled manpower and scientific-technological talent. It runs a vast educational network that is often better than that of the civilian sector. It is a very visible presence in Soviet society through its network of mass-revolutionary, para-military youth organizations, and military preparedness and civil-defense training activities.

The military is also well represented in the highest decision making bodies of the party, the government, and economic planning functions.

What are the implications of this steady growth of the military role, status and influence in the Soviet Union? Will there be an eventual militarization of the Communist Party and government? It is very important to consider these questions because Western perceptions of Soviet politics rarely touch upon the military's internal roles and influence. The vast size and geographic, linguistic, ethnic and racial diversity of Russia has historically presented administrative and political problems for Moscow. This has led to a strong reliance on the military for the maintenance of internal stability, law and order, national coherence, and the legitimacy of Moscow's authority.

The role of the Soviet military in decision making over six decades since the October revolution forms a fascinating strand in the history of Soviet politics. As the Soviet Union has evolved from a weak and underdeveloped country in the 1920s into one of the world's two superpowers after World War II, so too has the role of the Soviet military changed from that of an ineffective and passive participant in politics in the 1920s to a powerful and self confident interest group in the 1980s. It is the goal of this paper to provide a historical and structural

Besides this party control apparatus in the military there is the parallel structure of the secret police. There are KGB agents assigned to each division of the Soviet armed forces to deal not only with political loyalty and counter-espionage, but also with the military's morale, discipline, and effectiveness. In addition, they are charged with watching the party officials assigned to the military by the party. It is a system where the secret police watch the party watchdogs. The KGB are also armed with a vast array of modern armaments which provide the civilian leadership an alternative to the military especially in a possible internal domestic crisis.

The fact that the army was docile during the purge of 1937 illustrates the success with which the secret police could be used to neutralize the power of the army.

The Soviet leadership attempts to maintain civilian supremacy through the socialization process. The party exerts influence over all elements of society including the military. This is emphasized in public education, in special political education courses for civilians and in military training programs.

Even with the limitations on its activities, the military is by no means without political power. Most of its actions are those of an interest group promoting its own point of view. Like

### CHAPTER III

#### POLITICAL CONTROL AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Since Stalin, the means of control over the military have centered on the party and the secret police. The military in permeated with party members, the use of special organizational structures, and the presence of political officers in each military unit. Almost all military officers are members of the party. Estimates at the top level of military leadership go as high as 95 percent. Most army recruits are also members of the party or of the Komsomol, the party's youth organization. There they are subject to party discipline and control. The party's organization for the Military membership is linked directly to the Soviet Central Committee, rather than to territorial party units. Each party unit in the military has an appointed political officer known as a "zampolit," and unlike the party leaders of nonmilitary sections he is not elected but appointed. There is a zampolit assigned to each group of approximately 150 men. He is responsible for the political education of the troops, maintenance of troop morale, sponsorship of social and cultural events and the political obedience of both troops and officers. (6-329-332).



The 1945-1953 period saw the reimposition of the pre-war political system. Although the army had now demonstrated great effectiveness and achieved genuine popularity, it was not given a concomitant role in the political system. Its popular leader, Marshal Zhukov, was ousted from the Central Committee and demoted to a provincial command in 1946. Stalin took the bulk of the credit for the victory and police controls were again tightened in the armed forces. (5:3-12).

become in the near future a significant political actor in Soviet politics. (4-12-36)

The Second World War markedly changed the very nature of the Red Army. It had held fast in front of Moscow and Leningrad in the winter of 1941 and, despite further losses, in front of Stalingrad in the winter of 1942. The inspired heroism of the soldiers and the increasing capabilities of the commanders and war industry began to tell in battle. After breaking down the last major Nazi offense of the war in huge tank battles in front of Kuash in 1943, the Red Army proceeded to go over to a massive offensive. By the time the Allies finally landed on the continent in June 1944, the Red Army had liberated nearly all Soviet territory except in the northern sector. In the last year of the war the newly effective Red Army stormed Berlin, destroyed the Third Reich, and liberated a number of East European countries.

Despite the dominance of the military during the war years, Stalin retained his central role in decision making. By August 1941 he was supreme commander in chief, people's commissar of defense, chairman of the State Defense Committee, and chairman of the Stavka (Supreme Military Headquarters). The State Defense Committee, which directed the overall war effort, contained not a single professional military man among its eight members. (2-23).

in the army. These purges swept away three of five marshals, all eleven vice-commissars of defense, all eight admirals, 60 of 67 corps commanders, 221 of 397 brigade commanders, and 15,000 to 35,000 officers. The Great Purges terrorized the remaining officers and rigidly reimposed absolute Stalinist control over the military. (2:19).

The party used multiple methods to control the army. Coercion, in the form of massive purges and the creation of a secret police network within the army, played an important role. So successful were these methods that apart from the two hard purges of 1924-1925 and 1937-1941, the army was virtually exempt from the recurrent purges that swept the civilian party organization. Large independent secret-police formations, complete with tanks, airplanes, and artillery, formed a powerful deterrent to independent army action. Commissars checked the possibility of independent roles for officers, and the party carefully controlled the promotion and selection of officers.

By 1941 the Red Army was well on its way toward becoming a modern, effective fighting force. It was little like the ineffectual Red Army of 1929. Yet, the process of army transformation was not completed and had been hampered by the Great Purges. Those same purges had also smashed the possibility that the army might

Many Communist officers, angered by Trotsky's arrogant behavior, ardent support of czarist officers, and rejection of proletarian military doctrine, were hostile toward him. Leading Trotskyites in the army included Trotsky himself, head of the Political Administration Antonov-Ovseenko, and Moscow garrison commander Muralov. (2:19). In December 1923 Antonov-Ovseenko, on his own initiative, took the political campaign into the army. Besides student cells and the Moscow Military District, the Trotskyites were decisively routed everywhere. In retaliation, the Stalinists ousted all Trotskyites from the Army (with Trotsky himself being forced out in January 1925), installed loyal Stalinists in their place, and purged and restructured the Political Administration. Party authority in the Army was now beyond question. (1:21-34)

In 1936 the top army leaders were forced to take a stand on the vital question of terror and purges, a question that affected their personal well-being and institutional integrity. At the Central Committee Plenum in August 1936, two thirds of the members voted against the extension of the purges. So too did all army leaders except for Voroshilov and Budenny, who were personally tied to Stalin. The army leadership voted in roughly the same proportion as the party leadership and in no way led the opposition to Stalin. Nevertheless this opposition was liquidated totally in the Great Purges that lasted from 1937 until 1941

During the 1920's, when the ebbing revolutionary goal of Communists in the rest of Europe and the rise of fascist movements combined to isolate the Soviet Union and confirm its fear of a capitalist encirclement, Stalin's desire for a modern military establishment led to a series of far reaching changes in the socioeconomic structure in the Soviet Union. Through policies of collectivization and industrialization, huge sums of investment capital were to be extracted from the agricultural sector and invested in a large-scale heavy industry that would provide the basis for a military organization well enough equipped for defensive and political purposes.

Trotsky is correctly described as the creator of the Red Army. However, it was Stalin, during his long rule of the Soviet state who shaped its characteristics. He defined its internal role and set limits to its freedom of action. After the establishment of the Soviet state, Trotsky had been willing to sacrifice some of the Red Army's professionalism and military viability for the sake of ideological continuity and legitimacy. (3:19-32)

As a result of the strong personal influences of Stalin and Trotsky, a polarization of the army came about. In the early 1920s the Trotskyites retained a thin and tenuous base in the army while the Stalinists increasingly dominated the party. The bulk of all officers remained neutral and outside of the party.

ties with the ruling party elite were tenuous at best. The lone army man on the Politburo (War Commissar Trotsky) and four army men on the Central Committee ( where they made up only 10 percent of the membership) were party figures in the army but not of it. The massive demobilization of 90 percent of all soldiers in the early 1920s and the impoverished state of the Soviet economy guaranteed that the transition to a legitimate and effective army would be a lengthy one. (2:18).

It was only after much agonizing debate within the Communist Party, lasting almost a full decade after the Bolshevik Revolution, that the utopian idea of mass people's militia was laid to rest. An evolution in military thought took place as a result of the actual post- Revolutionary situation. However, it was within the context of the militia- standing army debates that the political administration of the Red Army had its origin and evolution. (1:8).

It is a major concern of the political leadership in Communist states to guarantee the party's monopoly on political, economic, and social power. In most sectors of Soviet society this goal is not difficult to achieve. However, within the military sector this is more complex.

The result was inevitable. In 1918 desertion from the ranks was enormous. In 1919 and 1920, according to the Soviet historian Olikov, the army apprehended in raids or saw return voluntarily under amnesty the staggering total of 2.85 million men. This almost equalled the number of men mobilized into the army. (2:8-15)

As a consequence, battlefield performance of the Red Army was very weak. Lenin wrote in October 1921, "on each occasion--on the Kolchak front, on the Deniken front, on the Yudenich front, on the Polish front, on the Wrangel front--we had been badly battered (and sometimes more than once)." (2:17)

Victory required frequent mobilizations of Communists and workers, shifting of key units and their commanders, extension of political concessions, and liberal use of secret-police terror. Even in victory, the weakness of the Red Army led to the separation of Poland, Finland, the Baltics, and parts of the Ukraine and Belorussia from the Soviet Union.

By the end of the civil war the Red Army emerged as a weak and vaguely legitimate force. Often it was as much a threat to the regime as it was an asset. (2:18). It's political role was thereby minimal. With 90 percent of the officers and 96 to 98 percent of the soldiers not belonging to the party, the army's

Hemmed in by commissars, secret-police agents, and the policy of holding as hostages the families of errant officers, the majority of them faithfully served the revolution.

The party relied on many diverse and heterogeneous elements to fill the ultimately 130,000 man officer corps that directed a 5.5 million man Red Army by the end of the civil war. In addition to the czarist officers, inexperienced but enthusiastic Communists formed a thin 10 percent of the officer corps. The bulk were new Communists with several thousand old Bolsheviks who filled key positions. Consequently the officer corps was sharply divided along class and political lines and its competence was minimal. In 1920 an astounding 43 percent of all officers had no military training at all. (3:16)

The situation was even worse in the ranks. After four years of World War I and the peasant revolution in the countryside, the majority of peasant soldiers were eager to return home. The Bolsheviks, however, needed to recruit millions of soldiers to fill the ranks of the fledgling Red Army. Inevitably, 70 to 80 percent of all soldiers would be peasants. The urban-oriented Bolsheviks, with their radical social experimentation and anti-religious propaganda lacked broad appeal in the countryside. As a result, only 5 percent of all Red Army men belonged to the party in the civil war. (2:17)



In May 1918, the Czech Legion uprising in Siberia triggered a bloody civil war that lasted two and a half years. At the beginning the Bolsheviks had no army of their own because the old Czarist army had disintegrated and the call for volunteers had met with meager response. Under these circumstances the Red Army was formed literally on the battlefield. (2:15)

The creation of an effective and legitimate officer corps is inevitably a lengthy process. A homogeneous officer corps is formed over many years through prolonged socialization of men with common background characteristics. In 1918 the Bolsheviks had almost no officers of their own. Nearly all party leaders had spent the years before the revolution in jail, exile, or the underground. Worse still, the bulk of the czarist officer corps was upper class in origin and monarchist in sentiment. Nevertheless, with the majority of the country in enemy hands by July 1918, the Bolsheviks out of necessity turned to mass recruitment of czarist officers.

Czarist officers represented 75 percent of all officers in 1918 and 35 percent in 1920. They represented nearly all staff positions and many top command posts during the civil war. Because of their theoretical knowledge and military experience they were invaluable to the Red Army (2:16).

## CHAPTER II

### THE SOVIET MILITARY UNDER LENIN AND STALIN

Shortly after his return to Russia in 1917, Lenin wrote about the need for establishing people's militias. He maintained that people must learn how to use arms and belong to a militia which was to replace the police and standing army. Since his earliest writings in 1905 he felt that workers did not want an army standing apart from the people but an army where workers and soldiers would merge into a single militia made up of all the people. (1:7)

Lenin wanted a citizen army, permeated with egalitarian virtues that performed in a disciplined, effective manner. The nature of the October Revolution and civil war profoundly influenced the development of the political role of the Red Army. The revolution with its mass urban working-class support and large independent peasant revolts obviated the need for an army in October 1917. A small force of ill-trained and poorly disciplined Red Guards was sufficient to topple the Provincial Government. By March 1918 the revolution had swept the Bolsheviks into power, often with little opposition. (2:15)

Nevertheless, the Party has always maintained its control and with the passing of a crisis, reemphasized its position, influence and control forcefully and dramatically.

However, if the current patterns of ideological stagnation, bureaucratic immobilism, and economic deterioration continue, while expanding costly and risky external military and political commitments of the government are maintained and increased, the party leadership might find itself more progressively dependent on the military. The conclusion of this paper will address the possible implications of that dependence and underscore the uneasiness with which the party must perceive that situation.

review of Soviet military-party relations. It will study the strains that that relationship created and the support for the system it provided. It will attempt to prove that military-party relations and influence has grown and receded periodically and predicably. However, over the long historical spectrum of the last six decades, its power and influence have grown to unprecedented levels and will continue that trend.

The inherent instability of power arrangements in the Soviet state forces contenders for power to seek alliances with the major social groupings (the governmental bureaucracy, the Party professionals, the military, the KGB, among others). They do it to either protect a monopoly of power or to ensure against the possibility of a showdown in a future crisis. During periods of firm leadership and internal stability, the party unequivocally dominates the state and is able to keep those institutions sufficiently divided and rigidly controlled. However, when the Party's hold is weakened by interparty power struggles, succession crises, or external military threats- the groups that have formerly been kept submissive and politically impotent tend to gain in stature and influence.

The military establishment, being a well integrated organization with a cohesive structure and powerful weapons and logistics facilities, has always been in an excellent position to exploit those occasions of division and weakness within the Party.

military organizations in Western bloc nations,,the Soviet military presses for greater appropriations, new military programs, and higher pay. In addition, the centralized state control of the economy leads the Soviet military to seek influence in the determination of national economic priorities. The military frequently speaks out in favor of greater investment in heavy industry and less investment in consumer goods. The Soviet military also often takes a hard "hard line" foreign policy stance--opposing policies of detente with the West and China (1:252). Given the primary and independence of the party leaders, the military does not always prevail. Indeed, it often appears that the military's advocacy of certain policies is used to justify the leadership's decisions but is rarely the determining factor in decision making (6-333).

The military has access to the political process through both the state and the party. It is represented both in the Council of Ministers and in party decision-making bodies. Usually between eight and ten percent of the members of the Soviet Central Committee are professional soldiers. Representation of this limited magnitude does not threaten civilian control but offers the military an opportunity to voice its point of view. The chart below shows the military representation in four typical party congresses.

Proportion of Servicemen in the Central Committee Elected by the  
22nd, 23rd, 24th, and 25th Party Congresses.

<u>CONGRESS</u>	<u>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP</u>			<u>SERVICEMEN</u>			<u>Percentage</u>
	<u>Full</u>	<u>Alt.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Full</u>	<u>Alt.</u>	<u>Total</u>	
22nd (1961)	175	155	330	14	17	31	9.5
23rd (1966)	195	165	360	14	18	32	8.9
24th (1971)	241	155	396	20	13	33	8.3
25th (1976)	287	139	426	20	10	30	7.0

Source: Pravda, March 6, 1976 (1:264)

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SOVIET MILITARY UNDER KHRUSHCHEV AND BREZHNEV

A change of leadership in the Soviet Union is not a process governed either by tradition or established rules. No Soviet party leader has ever voluntarily given up his powers. No provisions exist for the transfer of authority should the incumbent die or be removed as a result of disability or political coercion. This serves to explain why Lenin's infirmity and death, Trotsky's forced removal, and Stalin's death proved to be such critical events. (7:56). A grave leadership crisis can also be expected to arise from realignments of political relationships and loyalties among representatives of those institutions that carry the main political weight in the state. A former leader finds himself with a fate accomplished engineered by his opponents, to which he has no choice but to submit. This was the case in varying degrees in the ousters of both Malenkov and Khrushchev.

Since the death of Stalin, a basic difference in the leadership changes have occurred. In each succession there have been several party leaders competing for the top position. As a result, institutions outside the party have served as an arbiter and adjudicator of the leadership competition. The top

leadership of the armed forces have played a major role. This involvement of the military in the previously sacrosanct internal affairs of the party had fundamentally affected the relations between the party and the military. The scramble for the military's support and the subsequent need to reward the military for that support has undoubtedly made a lasting impression on the marshals and generals since Stalin. The consequences of that politicized role of the military has not fully been understood. However, there is little doubt that party leaders will continue to pay careful attention to the military's basic interests and preferences lest they ignore them at their own peril. (3:188-190)

The death of Stalin in March 1953 set off a protracted succession crisis that was to last until Khrushchev defeated the Anti-Party Group majority in the Presidium in June 1957. (2:24) During this period of uncertainty and division in the party leadership, party and police controls over the armed forces were eased. Party leaders jockeyed for the support of the military, which was beginning to be regarded as a powerful and legitimate political influence. Military leaders were eager to be rid of the straight-jacket imposed on it by Stalin and the shame of the Great Purges. In the 1953-1957 period the army was to be a significant political player on no less than three occasions. The year 1957 was to



clearly demonstrate the limits of its newfound power.

After Stalin's death three professional soldiers (Zhukov, Vasilevsky, and Kuznetsov) were named first deputy ministers of defense under Bulganin. Given the military's hatred of its secret-police rival, it was not surprising that in June 1953 Zhukov and Konev evidently helped arrest Beria, the head of the secret police, and denounced him at his trial. As a reward, Zhukov was promoted to full membership on the Central Committee and given Beria's seat. (8;;68-196)

Events did not develop to the satisfaction of the military. Malenkov's policies of 1953 and 1954 directly challenged basic military interests. Malenkov wanted de'tente with the West and rejected the thesis of the inevitability of war. He responded to popular pressure and increased production of consumer goods. He did this by reducing military expenditures by 9 percent. In 1954 Khrushchev, stressing the external threat from the west and the need for more military weaponry and heavy industrial investment, challenged Malenkov. The military strongly supported Khrushchev, especially when Malenkov cut Military spending a second year. The military was very pleased when Malenkov was removed as prime minister at the Central Committee Plenum in 1955. In return for its support, the military was well rewarded by Khrushchev. Military

appropriation and funds for heavy industry were increased by 12 percent in 1955. Zhukov became defense minister, eleven generals became marshals, and political controls were deemphasized in the military. Khrushchev became the commander in chief of the armed forces. (2:24).

In February 1956, the 20th Party Congress promoted Zukov to alternate membership on the Presidium. This was the first time that a professional soldier had ever been promoted to such a high political position.

In June 1957 Zhukov helped rescue Khrushchev when a majority of the Presidium voted to oust him. Zhukor arranged the prompt transport of Central Committee members to Moscow on military planes and at a Central Committee Plenum directly challenged Molotov, the leader of the opposition. After Khrushchev's victory at the plenum, Zhukov was promoted to full membership on the Presidium and political controls were further eased in the army.

Zhukov's prominence made Khrushchev increasingly apprehensive. In July 1957, Zhukov delivered a flamboyant speech where he gave himself a lot of credit and ignored the role of Khrushchev and the party. As a result Khrushchev purged Zhukov in October 1957. At a Central Committee Plenum, Marshals Malinovsky and Konev denounced Zhukov. Shortly thereafter, Malinovsky became defense minister.

The period from 1957-1964 was marked by varying degrees of tension. A division developed within the armed forces concerning defense expenditure priorities. Conservative elements in the ground forces and tactical air forces polarized themselves from the radical elements of the strategic rocket forces and sub-surface navy and Khrushchev capitalized on it. In 1958 and 1959 he limited the authority of commanders and increased that of party elements and the Main Political Administration in the armed forces. He was moved by the possibilities of de'tente with the West in January 1960 and at the same time desired to increase the production of consumer goods at home. By slashing the armed forces by one third, he sought to save 17 billion rubles. The army was not happy with his moves. A reduction of this magnitude meant retiring 250,000 officers, many of whom would suffer a reduction in pay and status. The Deputy Defense Ministers Sokolavky and Konev strongly resisted and were consequently retired and replaced by more reasonable officers--Grechko and Zakharov. However, almost half the cuts were made and relations between the party and the army deteriorated. Against the advice of the chief of the strategic rocket forces and other military leaders, Khrushchev ordered missiles to be placed in Cuba. The debacle of the 1962

Cuban missile crisis lowered Khrushchev's prestige. By October of 1964 Khrushchev finally did himself in and was overthrown by Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Podgorny. That year he had called for further reductions in the military budget and for heavy industry. The military leadership would do nothing to save him this time. (2-25).

The military played a supporting role in Khrushchev's ouster and became a chief beneficiary of his fall. Brezhnev and his colleagues wished to avoid the mistakes Khrushchev made by alienating key institutions in Soviet politics. He gave each key institution a secure and legitimate place in the decision-making process. All key groups were assured of real increases in their appropriations.

By avoiding threats to the key interests of powerful central institutions and without purging their personnel, Brezhnev secured his own position. (8:168-175)

On April 27, 1973, the Party Central Committee named three new full members to its Politburo, Chairman of the KGB Yu. V. Andropov, Minister of Foreign Affairs A.A. Gromyko, and Minister of Defense A.A. Grechko. Each selection was politically significant but the selection of the most significance was that of Grechko's.

To usher in an era of de'tente, Brezhnev had to make significant concessions. Grechko's appointment appeared to have been in part directed toward the professional military leadership that military appropriation commitments would not slacken even in an age of disarmament, arms control, and peaceful coexistence. The Central Committee adopted a resolution on April 27, 1973 that emphasized that close cooperation with the West in several select areas, did not suggest that the external threat had abated. (1:249). Attention was called to "the necessity for constant vigilance and preparedness to give a rebuff to any intrigues of the aggressive reactionary circles of imperialism." (1:250). Grechko's political elevation appeared to have been more due to political requirements of the system than to the political importance of the individual. It underscored the rickety foundation of Communist rule which required more military preparedness as peaceful contacts with the West increased.

Under Brezhnev the Soviet military once again became a privileged sector of Soviet society. It enjoyed a steady rise in military appropriations of 3 to 5 percent a year. The armed forces expanded to over 4 million men and modernized with a vast array of sophisticated weapons. The Soviet navy under Gorshkov truly became a blue water navy capable of challenging American

supremacy. This expansion was not limited primarily to those conservative elements of the military that had suffered under Khrushchev. During the 1970s the Soviet Union not only achieved strategic nuclear parity with the United States but threatened to take the lead over the United States in the 1980s. By 1980 the Soviet military was receiving at least 13 percent of the GNP and gave great attention to the material status and professional interests of the armed forces and especially its officer corps.

(2:27)

Nevertheless, this did not mean that the armed forces were dominant in the policymaking process. Formal military representation in the Central committee declined to about 7 percent. When Marshall Grechko died, a civilian, Dimitri Ustmov, who had been in charge of military industry, replaced him. When the top party leadership differed in its views from the military leadership, it retained the power to enforce its own views. Despite military objection, the Soviet Union signed SALT I and initiated SALT II. Highly sophisticated military weaponry, which had not been made available to Warsaw Pact troops, was shipped to Middle Eastern countries again against military objection. These are just two examples of the limitations on the policymaking role and influence of the armed forces. (2:27)

However, more interesting are two examples of Brezhnev's personal reassertion of authority over the military. The first example is Brezhnev's promotion to General of the Army. At a conference in Moscow held on April 17-18, 1975 to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the end of World War II, numerous speakers praised the Soviet contribution to the victory over Nazi Germany. Minister of Defense Grechko in his speech gave passing reference to the fact of General Secretary Brezhnev's promotion to the four-star general officer rank, "general of the army." Since Brezhnev held only the two stars of a lieutenant general, as a political officer in the late 1940's and again in the mid-1950's, and since it was never reported that he had been promoted to the three star rank of Colonelgeneral, Grechko's announcement appears to have been a dramatic attempt by Brezhnev to enhance his personal prestige and reaffirm his and the Party's control over military matters. (1:261).

The second example was Brezhnev's control over the speakers list and agenda during the 25th Party Congress in 1976. In sharp contrast with previous Congresses, the only major speech in foreign policy and military affairs was delivered by Brezhnev himself. He wanted to guard the development of de'tente and peaceful coexistence and noted "a turn for the better in our

relations with the major power of the capitalist world" and "there are good prospects for our relations with the USA also in the future." The overwhelming emphasis of his speech was on arms control and disarmament issues. In his five hour speech he made only two fleeting references to the Soviet armed forces. (1:267) He thanked them for doing a good job but made no reference for their "further strengthening." The absence of a speech by any top military leader precluded any possibility for the presentation of a harder line. The absence of a Grechko presentation was significant because of its lack of precedent. Although he died two months later, there was no indication that poor physical health had kept him from making a speech. He had been extremely active and highly visible at that time. The facts point to the hypothesis that Grechko had prepared a hard line speech which the political leadership found unsuitable for presentation. If Grechko had been in essential agreement with Brezhnev, his speech would have served to support the General Secretary's position. Since many speeches by Soviet delegates had little purpose beyond praising Brezhnev's astuteness and wisdom, there is no conceivable reason to believe that Brezhnev would shun any laudatory remarks by the Minister of Defense. There is also the possibility that the political leadership had already decided to remove Grechko from the Ministry of Defense. As late as Armed Forces Day in



1976, the speeches of the top military men reflected the fact that Grechko was either unwilling or unable to moderate the public exhortations of his military colleagues for a harder "anti-imperialist" line and for greater military buildup. If Grechko had been slated for retirement, the striking of a Grechko speech would indicate the leadership's displeasure with Grechko and a maneuver in his gradual withdrawal. (:268-270).

In summary, during the Brezhnev era, de'tente clearly had an unsettling effect on the political control of the Soviet armed forces. It was an era where the party elites tried first to coopt the leaders responsible for the armed forces to an unsuccessful degree. Grechko was either unable or unwilling to expunge the demands of the military for even larger military budgets and further strengthening of the armed forces.

As a result, the Party was forced to reassert its direct control over the armed forces. "Marshal" Brezhnev's chairmanship of the Defense Council, the highest organ of civilian administration and control over the armed forces, was publicly announced. "Marshal" Ustinov, a government and party official, was placed at the head of the Ministry of Defense. The coinciding of these two events seemed to indicate that the Party, under pressures from internal advocates who argued for less emphasis

on a military hard line during the era of de'tente, took these steps to demonstrate forcefully and dramatically its determination to control the armed forces. (1:272)

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

The Soviet military has come to the Party's support on a number of occasions aiding in intra-party struggles and in conflicts with other Communist challengers from abroad. The military has also assumed a number of key roles and positions within the system. It has become the main vehicle and supporter of ever-expanding Soviet external military and political commitments to clients and proxies in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. It is the key stabilizing factor in the restless alliance system in East Europe, where in the final analysis only the military restores order, punishes opponents and serves as their domestic policeman. (19-121). The military is the mainstay against the pressures and demands from a former Chinese ally. It is the dedicated educator, national integrator and disciplined Spartan model for the restless and diverse young and old from the various geographic, linguistic, National, religious and class based sectors of society. The party leadership continuously becomes more dependent upon the military for internal and external policy purposes. The military has always shown itself to be a loyal, conservative, and stable force within the state. Within

## CHAPTER VII

### ANOTHER CYCLE BEGINS

Mr. Romanov is the Central Committee secretary in charge of the military-industrial complex and is a strong contender for the Politburo top job. His rival for that position reportedly is Mr. Gorbachev who was a close friend of Mr. Ustinov. With Ustinov's death, Mr. Gorbachev lost an ally and friend who was another member of the Politburo. This probably meant some lost ground and leverage in his political struggle. Mr. Romanov is known to have close ties to the officer corps is probably working hard to expand those ties to widen his support base. With the reports of Mr. Chernenko's worsening health, the Kremlin's in fighting must be now very intense. (16-E4). The military has always been and is now most probably very much a key player in this current succession crisis. They will probably fare better if Romanov emerges as the winner and less so if Gorbachov wins. However, regardless of the outcome they will do very well. No serious contender can afford to ignore them.

Marshall Ogarkov standing in the second row of officers is a symbolic demonstration of how forcefully and dramatically the party is prepared to control its military. At the same time it seems possible that the party's actions underscore its uneasiness in its ability to control the armed forces, not only at the highest levels but also at the level of the common soldier.

couraged the princes of the Politburo to pursue their own objectives more vigorously. A man of Ogarkov's stature probably could not have been removed from office unless a power struggle had progressed beyond the preliminary maneuvers." (13:44).

Defense Minister Ustinov died December 21, 1984 and Marshal Sokolov was named as his replacement. Mr. Ustinov's death left a power vacuum in the top Soviet leadership. What most of the Politburo in their 70's seemed to be saying when they replaced him with the 73 year old first Deputy Defense Minister Sokolov was that they would be filling that vacuum themselves and put off the transition to another generation for as long as possible. A western analyst in the New York Times is quoted as saying, "He is the conservative, not unexpected choice, who brings continuity and professional credibility." With Marshal Sokolov, the military will not have a direct voice in the Politburo. However, the Defense Minister will once more be a military man. There were other military candidates to choose from like Marshal Ogarkov. Perhaps as the New York Times article suggests "he was too aggressive to serve the needs of the Politburo." Ogarkov did appear at Ustinov's lying-in-state only in the second ranks of officers. (16-E5)

command authorities" and again on the dependence of the military on the economy. (18:6-7). The fact that most of the interview was reprinted in in a November issue of Red Star with the exception of his references to Engels was "a clear sign of how Ogarkov got into trouble with Konstantin Chernenko "the lifetime protection of Party doctrine and ideology." (17:C-4).

To many analysts, Ogarkov's removal came as no surprise. Many were surprised that he lasted so long. Newsweek magazine speculated that "the most plausible explanation for the purge was the theory that Ogarkov had been caught on the weaker side of a political struggle within the Soviet leadership." The article goes on to say that "Ogarkov may have been hit in the crossfire between two upwardly mobile, and relatively young, Politburo members: Grigory Romanov, 61, and Mikhail Gorbachov, 53. Romanov is the Central Committee secretary in charge of the military-industrial complex, and he is thought to have close ties to the officer corps, including Ogarkov. There were signs, however, that Gorbachov had gained an edge on his rival in the maneuvering to succeed Chernenko- and that, backed by Ustinov, he may have moved to deprive Romanov of a valuable ally by getting rid of Ogarkov." In summary the article concludes, "the uncertain state of Chernenko's physical and political health may have en-

about a failure to revise outlooks and stan<sup>2</sup>ation in the development and particularly in the practical assimilation of the methods of utilization of armed forces in war. (9-3). Specifically, citing Engels, he emphasized the importance of new technology, the need for economic mobilization, and the need for a militarist indoctrination of the population during peacetime. These were unequivocally the traditional ideological provinces of the Soviet political leadership. Ustinov during this same period was saying that current and future Soviet defense requirements are taken into account in already operative economic plans and that all that was required was fulfillment of these plans. It was quite possible that Soviet propagandists and ideological leaders did not enjoy being told by Ogarkov that their efforts had been inadequate. (17-C4).

In his October 1982 meeting with top military commanders, Brezhnev, possibly in response to Ogarkov's criticisms, appeared to go out of his way to praise Ustinov and to reassure the armed forces of satisfaction at the top political levels with the way military affairs were developing. One last example of trespassing into the ideological arena was Ogarkov's May 9, 1984 interview Red Star where he once more invoked Engels on the primary importance of technology "often against the will of the Military



## CHAPTER VI

### OGARKOV AS AN EXAMPLE

Marshal Ogarkov's emerging doctrinal, policy and ideological differences can be traced at least back to 1979 where in a lengthy discussion of military strategy in the Soviet Military Encyclopedia, he referred to the Soviet Union's "objective possibilities for achieving victory" in a nuclear war. President Brezhnev in his report to the 26th congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union in February 1981 insisted that it was "dangerous madness to count on victory in nuclear war." (9-3). In 1981 and 1982 Marshal Ogarkov spoke out about the need for basic changes and called for shakeups which cut across the caution and tightening up which featured the last years of Brezhnev and the entire Andropov reign. During this time period Ogarkov and Ustinov made sharply divergent assessments about the overall status of the Soviet armed forces. Where Ustinov indicated general satisfaction over the way Soviet military power was developing, Ogarkov reflected a sense of urgency and concern. In a July 1981 article in Kommunist, Ogarkov criticized unnamed Soviet leaders for a lack of comprehensive and integrated concepts of war in modern conditions. He was concerned

threshold of party approval, the mechanisms of party control are set in motion. The individual or the policy is brought into line.

The Chernenko succession after Andropov's death changed the fortunes of Marshal Ogarkov. An attempt to piece together those patterns of behavior and policy development may shed some light on what those thresholds of approval might be before party control mechanisms are exercised.

"a Revolution in Military Affairs" and are therefore comparable to the significance of Soviet acquisition and operational absorption of nuclear weapons. (15-487).

On September 7, 1984 there was a Tass press release. "The USSR Council of Ministers has appointed Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergei Fyodorovich Akhromeyev Chief of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces and USSR First Deputy Minister of Defense. Marshal of the Soviet Union Nikolai Ogarkov has been relieved of his duties as Chief of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces and USSR First Deputy Minister of Defense in connection with his transfer to other work." (18-6).

All the circumstances surrounding Marshal Ogarkov's reassignment point to policy considerations of the greatest national significance. (13-44). In order to provide an example of the current state of military political influence on the party, several recent developments associated with Marshal Ogarkov's career serve to illustrate that the influence the military has can change rapidly. The Soviet Communist Party appears to be vigilant with regard to military political action. The party possesses elaborate mechanisms of control that are unparalleled outside the communist world. When an individual or a policy drafted by the defense community strays from a certain

command in the late 1960's was mainly because of Ustinov's influence. Like Ustinov, he was an engineer and was the first technical specialist to be appointed to Soviet Chief of General Staff. This had broken a tradition of successive senior field commanders. (14-435).

Ogarkov, a weapons expert, was appointed a First Deputy Chief of the General Staff in 1968, a post associated with Soviet strategic nuclear weapons policy. For the next six years Ogarkov was one of the senior military advisors attached to the Soviet SALT delegation. In 1974 he was promoted to Deputy Minister of Defense and in 1977, shortly after Ustinov's own appointment as Defense Minister, he replaced Marshal Kulikov as Chief of the General Staff. (14:435).

Since the late 1970's, Marshal Ogarkov emerged as one of the strongest leaders in the Soviet Union, if not the strongest. Since 1977, he was the leading figure in the formulation of contemporary and future Soviet Military Science and Art of War. The magnitude and overall significance of this evolution had been considered by the Soviets to be comparable with the introduction of artillery to the Russian Army some 600 years ago. These doctrinal refinements were labelled by Marshal Ogarkov as

had words of approval for the country's "well considered" socioeconomic program and its "broad and concrete peace program." He then added that "de'tente, disarmament, resolution of conflicts, and elimination of the threat of nuclear war are the tasks that face us ahead." This was not a hardliner speech and somewhat inconsistent with Andropov. (7:70). These discrepancies continued into the June 1983 Central Committee Plenum. Pravda began publishing editorials that warned of disunity in the Party, "Careerism" and "affinity with class enemies" as vices that had developed in the inner circles of the Party. On May 9, 1983 Pravda carried an article by Ustinov that made a surprising reference to Andropov as "chairman of the USSR Defense Council." He went on to claim that Andropov "had already had a direct part in determining military policy for many years." (7:72).

As this maneuvering continued at the highest levels of the Kremlin, there developed opportunities for high ranking military officers to comment on policy and doctrine. No one in the military was more outspoken than the Chief of Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov. Andropov and Ogarkov had enjoyed a 43 year long standing relationship and professional co-operation. (15-487). Ogarkov's rise to senior

no blemish of this sort on his record. Furthermore, his long experience as head of the KGB apparently increased his standing with the military. (7:58).

Andropov had come a long way. The former head of the KGB was co-opted to the Politburo only in 1973 and for a long time afterward tended to rank low. Now the former KGB head ranked first, the defense minister fourth, and the minister of foreign affairs fifth. (7:69).

Chernenko's fortunes continued to ebb some what after the succession. For the first time since 1976, Chernenko did not participate in the Soviet delegation to the Warsaw Pact summit in December 1982. (7:67). This was after both he and Andropov had spoke at the Plenum in November 1982. Andropov's message must have sounded attractive to the military. "We know very well that one cannot obtain peace from the imperialists simply by asking for it." "Peace can be defended only by relying on the invincible might of the Soviet forces." Chernenko in his speech to the Plenum hinted at other priorities. He stressed peaceful coexistence and domestic issues to the point of observing that defense "depended on economic development." He said further that, "our policy objectives will continue to be the welfare of the people and preservation of peace on earth." He also

Politburo could not immediately agree on who was to succeed him. The delay indicated that Andropov had some difficulty winning the support of the majority which rejected Chernenko. (7:58)

The Soviet Armed Forces played an important role in the decision. An indication of the Armed forces role in the choice of a successor was the prominence given Defense Minister Ustinov during Brezhnev's funeral and lying-in state ceremonies. Ustinov was the only Politburo member other than Andropov to deliver a eulogy at the funeral. The significance of the spokesman for the military establishment delivering a eulogy, while Prime Minister Tikhonov and former crown prince Chernenko were denied this honor, signaled the singular status and power position of Ustinov, which seemed to be entirely new. During the funeral he appeared in fourth position after Andropov, Tikhonov, and Chernenko--higher than ever before. (7:57).

Why did the armed forces decide to throw its support behind Andropov? There were no significant policy differences between Chernenko and Andropov. Both had advocated de'tente and arms control negotiations. It seems that Chernenko had antagonized the military by stating on October 19, 1982, in Tbilisi that the USSR was already "strong enough" to counter any threat coming from the United States by military means. Andropov had

## CHAPTER V

### THE SOVIET MILITARY UNDER ANDROPOV AND CHERNENKO

The transfer of power after Brezhnev's death took place amid an impressive show of collective unity and smooth efficiency. However, several important conclusions could be drawn. Chernenko was the big loser. For years he had been Brezhnev's right-hand man. To analysts he was the favorite and obvious choice as a successor. This probably did not add to his popularity among other Politburo members. In addition to being defeated in the election for the new CPSU Central Committee general secretary, he was denied the honor of delivering a eulogy for his longtime friend and patron. Chernenko was further humiliated by being charged with the task of proposing Andropov's candidacy for the post of general secretary. It was obvious that during the period immediately following Brezhnev's death, Chernenko did not have the support of the majority of the Politburo and therefore had no chance of being elected general secretary. (7:57).

There were several reports in the Western press that the election of Andropov did not go unchallenged. There was a substantial delay between Brezhnev's death and publication of the official announcement. The delay suggested that the



its ranks it has cultivated a sense of solidarity. Its cohesiveness and camaraderie can be summed in a sentence from the Military's central, Krasnaria Zvezda: "In a society where each man is a brother to his fellow man, even an unknown soldier is best friend to each of us." (3:190). The corporateness of its officer corps is strengthened by tradition, by pride in the uniform, and by a patriotic sense of serving the fatherland.

These qualities have given the military establishment the resilience that has enabled it to raise effective obstacles to the Party's almost obsessive endeavor to break down its natural independence. Stalin gained temporary mastery by brutally cutting down the officer corps. Today, his heirs in the Kremlin are no longer able, and are probably unwilling, to rush such a showdown. Perhaps, as Jane's Defense weekly suggested last October, even Marshall Ogarkov's removal as Chief of the General Staff may in fact have been a promotion in that he commands the Soviet Union's largest force as Commander in Chief of the Western Theatre of War. (12:716).

The military, sitting on top of a vast nuclear and conventional armory has clearly become a powerful, proud, national institution. It is the carrier of historical and nationalistic

traditions and memories, particularly memories of wars against dangerous foreign aggressors which evoke positive and supportive responses from the populace.

It is clearly possible that the military with its vast organization and resources, has now the capability to intervene in the new politics of the party and government. (19-134). O-garkov's activity may have been a harbinger. However, cognizant of the military's unique potential as a rival, the Soviet Communist party will probably be even more vigilant in the future with regard to military political action. The elaborate mechanisms of civilian control are unparalleled anywhere outside the communist world. Nevertheless, the military still has strong, political influence during times of internal party competition since it constitutes a power base for which leaders inevitably compete. Furthermore, even in normal times, the military's professional expertise is needed by the party policy-makers in order to draft defense policies, national economic priorities, and foreign policies. The party's ever growing need of the military's expertise will continue to enhance increasingly the influence of the military on its civilian masters.

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